

**THANK
YOU**



PROJECT COMPASSION : Donations to Project Compassion 2021 supports Caritas Australia's community development and emergency relief programs in partnership with marginalised communities around the world. LENTEN DONATION ENVELOPES are available at the back of the Church **NOW**. Inside of the envelopes you will find six Lenten story envelopes to return with your donation each week (see back of envelope for instructions).

Week 6 : AN AUSTRALIAN ICON - For over half a century, generations of Australians have participated in Project Compassion, making it one of the nation's longest running charity campaigns.

Throughout five decades of natural disasters, conflicts and crises, Caritas Australia has worked alongside vulnerable communities with the generous support of Australians. Project Compassion has also helped with access to education, health services, agricultural training and through programs that reduce maternal and infant mortality. This year, we have presented five stories from people striving to 'Be More' – just a few amongst the millions who have been helped through Project Compassion.

As we celebrate this Australian icon, we would like to thank generations of supporters nationwide for their generosity, which allows us to move forward with lifesaving strategies to tackle new challenges.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 to help continue empowering vulnerable communities around the world lift themselves and their communities out of poverty.

Our Prayer for This Week:

We pray for the women, children and men most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice. That we continue to be of service and work together as a global family, to ensure that all people have what they need to live a full and beautiful life especially through our support of Project Compassion.

PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday is the final Sunday of Lent, the beginning of Holy Week, and commemorates the triumphant arrival of Christ in Jerusalem, days before he was crucified.

Palm Sunday is known as such because people will often receive palm fronds which they use to participate in the re-enactment of Christ's arrival in Jerusalem. In the Gospels, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a young donkey, to the lavish praise of the townspeople who threw clothes, or possibly palms or small branches, in front of him as a sign of homage. This was a customary practice for people of great respect.

Palm branches are widely recognised symbol of peace and victory.

WHAT WE ARE DOING AT ST THOMAS AQUINAS:

Branches have been cut from our Lone Pine tree, situated to the left of the Parish front doors, and individually cut smaller for each Parishioner to take a piece home.

The Lone Pine story:

On 6 August 1915 the 1st Australian Infantry Division launched a major offensive at Plateau 400 on Gallipoli. The ridges, once covered with the Aleppo pine, had been cleared to provide cover for the Turkish trenches, leaving just one, solitary pine. The area became known as Lone Pine Ridge. After three days of brutal fighting the Anzacs succeeded in capturing the enemy trenches, but this bloody action cost the Australians 2,000 men. The Turks' losses were estimated at 7,000.

After the battle, Lance Corporal Benjamin Charles Smith, 3rd Battalion AIF, collected several pine cones from the branches used to cover the Turkish trenches. He sent the cones home to his mother, Jane McMullin, in remembrance of his brother Mark, who had died in the fighting on 6 August. From one of these cones Mrs McMullin sowed several seeds, and successfully raised two seedlings. One was planted in Inverell, where both her sons had enlisted. The other was presented to the Australian War Memorial, to be planted in the grounds in honour of all the sons who fell at Lone Pine.

(Reference: <https://www.awm.gov.au/shop/lone-pine-seedlings>)

EASTER RECONCILIATION REMINDER:

7.00pm, Monday, 29th March 2021



St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



Parish Website:
Parish Facebook Page:
Parish Priest:
Assistant Priest:
Parish Pastoral Council:
Parish Office Hours:

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www.stchurchspringwood.org.au
St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Fr Paul Slyne - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0418 461 316
Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0415 077 969
Email - springwoodppc@gmail.com
Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am
Weekday Mass: Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am
Rosary & Devotions: Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am
Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7.30 - 8.30 pm
Intercession & Adoration: None until further notice
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment
Reconciliation: By request
Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers
Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers

A Poem to Sit With

Blessings

blessed be the shy
blessed be the gentle
blessed be the meek
blessed be the mild
blessed be the courteous
blessed be the reverent
blessed be the humble

for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven

blessed be the scorned
blessed be the rejected
blessed be the outcast
blessed be the mocked

for all illusions
as nightmares
must pass

but what shall remain
is each soul's light

flashing forth from
the Father of Light
ringed in constellations
of light now and forever

Amen.

J.Janda

A Gospel Reflection

Mark 14:3-9

The Anointing at Bethany

While Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

Today's Readings: Palm Sunday (Entrance Mk 11:1-10 or Jn 12:12-16); Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Mk 14:1—15:47

Entrance Antiphon: Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 21:8-9, 17-20, 23-24, R.v.2

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Gospel Acclamation: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! Christ became obedient for us even to death, dying on the cross. Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Communion Antiphon: Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done.

Next Week: The Sacred Paschal Triduum

We acknowledge the Darug and Gundugarra people, the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to elders both past and present.



Recently Deceased: John Hoare

Sick: James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, Luca Hurley and all Private Intentions.

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

There are no 9.30am Masses on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday

Remember: You must book for Easter Masses

Parish and Local Community News

EASTER MASS TIMES ONLINE: Holy Week and Easter Mass Times for the Diocese of Parramatta can be found online at <https://catholicoutlook.org/easter2021/> or on www.parracatholic.org.

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETS 1ST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH: St. Thomas Aquinas Pastoral Parish Council meets on the 1st Wednesday of every month. Next Meeting: Wednesday 7th April at 7:30 pm, STA Church.

ORGAN: The Parish has an organ that is currently sitting, unused, in the crying room. Two pedals do not work so it would need a small repair job. If you are interested, we are only asking for a small donation to the church. Please contact the Parish office.

JOIN THE BELLRINGERS OF ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL: The Peal of Bells of St Patrick's Cathedral have been officially installed. Bell ringing commences 10.30am Sundays ahead of the Solemn Mass. If you would like to enquire about learning to ring the bells, please contact Fr Christopher Del Rosario on Christopher.Del-Rosario@parracatholic.org. For further information, please visit <https://stpatscathedral.com.au/bellsofstpatricks/>

PONTIFICAL HOLY LAND GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION: Friday, 2 April, The annual Pontifical Good Friday Collection will be held on Friday 2 April around Australia. The collection will continue to support the works of the Holy Land Custody through the generosity of the Australian Church. Your donation is a direct way to make a difference in the lives of those who are keeping alive the Christian presence in the land of Jesus in the face of great odds.

BECOME LIKE WATER 6-DAY RETREAT: 23 – 29 April, St Mary's Retreat Centre, Douglas Park, is hosting a 6-day retreat and prayer weekend from 23 to 29 April. This retreat will notice how we are called to be participants in the life of grace by reflecting on the Mysteries of Light. The 6-day retreat is \$870, with the prayer weekend of 23 - 25 April \$290. For more information, and to register, call (02) 4630 0233, email contact@towersretreat.org.au or visit www.towerstreat.org.au

2021 St Thomas Aquinas Church SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

First Reconciliation will take place on: **TUESDAY, 30th March 2021 at 5.15pm**

Only one parent, per family, ONLY in the church for Reconciliation.

Dear God

We thank you for loving each one of us.

We belong to you through Jesus.

Please help us to show love for one another.

Teach us to reach out to each other with forgiving hearts.

Amen.

Please keep our First Reconciliation children in your prayers.

Palm Sunday - In Exile

*"Let the Christ, the King of Israel,
come down now from the cross
that we may see and believe."
(Passion according to Mark)*

When Jesus sweated blood in the Garden of Gethsemane and asked his Father to let the cup of suffering pass him by he wasn't, for the most part, cringing before the prospect of brute physical suffering. He was cringing before the prospect of a very particular kind of suffering that is generally more feared than physical pain. When he asked God if it was really necessary to die in this way he was referring to more than death through capital punishment. Crucifixion was devised and designed by the Romans with more than one thing in mind.

It was designed as capital punishment, to put a criminal to death, but it aimed to do a couple of other things as well. It was designed to inflict optimal physical pain. Thus, the procedure was dragged out over a good number of hours and the amount of pain inflicted at any given moment was carefully calculated so as not to cause unconsciousness and thus ease the pain of the one being crucified. Indeed, they sometimes even gave wine mixed with morphine to the person being crucified, not to ease his suffering, but to keep him from passing out from pain so as to have to endure it longer.

But crucifixion was designed with still another even more callous intent. It was designed to humiliate the person. Among other things, the person was stripped naked being publicly exposed. Crucifixion clearly had humiliation in mind.

We have tended to downplay this aspect, both in our preaching and in our art. We have, as Jürgen Moltmann put it, surrounded the cross with roses, with aesthetic and antiseptic wrapping towels. But that was not the case for Jesus. His body publicly humiliated. That, among other reasons, is why the crucifixion was such a devastating blow to his disciples and why many of them abandoned Jesus and scattered after the crucifixion. They simply couldn't connect this kind of humiliation with glory, divinity, and triumph.

Interestingly there is a striking parallel between what crucifixion did to the human body and what nature itself often does to the human body through old age, cancer, dementia, AIDS, the Pandemic, and diseases such as Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's, Huntington's, and other such sicknesses that humiliate the body before killing it. They expose publicly what is most vulnerable inside of our humanity. They shame the body.

Why? What is the connection between this type of pain and the glory of Easter Sunday? Why is it, as the gospels say, "necessary to first suffer in this manner so as to enter into glory?" Because, paradoxically, a certain depth of soul can only be attained through a certain depth of humiliation. How and why is this so? It isn't easy to articulate rationally but we can understand it through experience.

Ask yourself this question with courage and honesty: what experiences in my life have made me deep? In virtually every case, I will venture to say, experiences that have deepened you will be incidents that you feel some shame in acknowledging, a powerlessness from which you were unable to protect yourself, an abuse from which you could not defend yourself, an inadequacy of body or mind that has left you vulnerable, a humiliating incident that once happened to you, or some mistake you made which publicly exposed your lack of strength in some area. All of us, like Jesus, have also been, in one way or another, hung up publicly and humiliated. And we have depth of soul to just that extent.

But depth of soul comes in very different modes. Humiliation makes us deep, but we can be deep in character, understanding, graciousness, and forgiveness, or we can be deep in anger, bitterness and revenge-seeking. Jesus' crucifixion stretched his heart and made it huge in empathy, graciousness, and forgiveness. It doesn't always work that way. Many of societies worst have also experienced deep humiliation and it too has stretched their hearts, except in their case it has made them deep in bitterness, callousness, and murder.

Several summers ago, I was at a conference at the University of Notre Dame where the Holy Cross community had gathered to prepare itself for the Beautification of its founder. Reflecting upon the spirituality of their founder, one Holy Cross member offered this challenge to his community: if you live inside of any family for any length of the time, at some point that family will injure you and wound you deeply. But, and this is the point, how you handle that wound, with either bitterness or forgiveness, will colour the rest of your life!

In the crucifixion, Jesus was humiliated, shamed, brutalised. That pain stretched his heart to a great depth. But that new space did not fill it with bitterness and anger. It filled it instead with a depth of empathy and forgiveness that we have yet to fully understand.

Ron Rolheiser

**Next weeks Bulletin will be available on
Holy Thursday**